

Report to: Economy, Arts, Sports & Public Realm Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 21/07/2025

Subject: Update on Waste and Recycling Service Developments

Report author: Annie Baker, Assistant Director, Street Environmental Services

Responsible Director: Mark Raisbeck, Director of Public Realm

SUMMARY

The report sets out the progress made in our waste and recycling services through the on-going roll-out of food waste recycling, introduction of wheeled bins and garden waste recycling and other service developments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee to note and comment on the report.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	The services provide a modern waste collection service, meeting the demands of residents and providing the associated benefits of a cleaner environment where businesses want to invest and opportunities for local jobs.
Creating a compassionate council	The services place great emphasis on engagement, compassion and providing a bespoke flexible service that accommodates the needs of residents.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Rather than using available legislative powers (s46 Environmental Protection Act 1990) to carry out a blanket imposition of containers on residents, we have designed service changes to ensure that we can work with residents to identify how we might best meet their waste

	requirements. We initially ran a prototype of the service to allow residents to experience and comment on how the new service operates.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The services reduce the council's waste disposal costs, by reducing waste and diverting more material for recycling
Taking pride in H&F	The services collect household waste and recycling in more secure containers wherever possible, reducing litter spillage and keeping our streets cleaner.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The services enable residents to recycle more and reduce the amount of waste that is sent for waste disposal.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

BACKGROUND

1. The single best thing we can do with our waste is to avoid producing it in the first place, and on this measure, LBHF is a very high performing borough, with only 227.2kg of household waste per head collected each year. This is exceptional performance and places us 3rd best in the country.
2. In managing the waste that we do collect from households, the best thing we can do is to recycle that material. Looking at the percentage of waste we collect for "dry" recycling (paper, cardboard, metal tins and cans, glass bottles and jars, plastic bottles etc), we are the best performing inner London borough (and the 4th best across all of London).
3. Overall recycling rates include food and garden waste (the latter in particular we have much less of than some other boroughs due to the built nature of LBHF) and by this measure, we have historically been in the bottom quartile of performance across London, with a recycling rate that has been sitting in the 24-27% range for several years. Now, following the introduction of the measures detailed in this report, our recycling rate is sitting at almost 30%, lifting us out of the lowest quartile.
4. We are introducing a number of service changes to help to boost our recycling rate. This is not just good for the environment but also represents a more financially efficient approach: a tonne of recycling costs on average over £100 less to process than a tonne of waste sent for disposal.

5. We reported previously to PAC on our work to run a prototype service, delivering wheeled bins (where suitable) and food waste recycling to approximately 5,000 homes across the borough from the autumn of 2020, including the very positive feedback we received when we surveyed residents (see PAC report of November 2022).
6. Following this work, the borough wide roll-out of the food waste recycling service to street-based properties began in November 2023. A wide range of activities were undertaken to ensure that the implementation of the new service went smoothly and were reported to PAC in July 2024.
7. The roll-out of the service to street-based homes was completed just over a year ago. Approximately half of our street-based homes have suitable (off pavement) storage for wheeled bins. Throughout the roll-out, we asked people to try the containers wherever they have suitable space. However, where residents have been unwilling to do so, we have not made their use mandatory.. Approximately 300 homes (of c.20,000 who are suitable) across the whole borough refused to use the bins during the initial roll out. However, we continue to receive requests for bins, for example where new residents move into a property that did not have them. The new bins and food waste container are pictured here on the right.
8. The vast majority of engagement we had with residents during the delivery work was positive and we continue to receive some really great feedback from residents, including:



Thank you for providing the new bins, great initiative to promote quality recycling. – Amir

I think it is a great initiative - particularly the addition of food waste collection. – Nikki

I very much welcome the food recycling which is a great initiative. – Julia

Thank you for the fantastic initiative with the new bins for rubbish, recycling and food waste, it is really welcome and appreciated. - Kalina

Latest service improvements

9. Work has continued to build on the improvements previously reported on our recycling rate and has included the following:

10. Consolidation of the wheeled bin and food waste services for street-based homes: we are continuing to work with residents to ensure the new services work well for everyone and encourage increasing levels of participation in use of the food waste service and wheeled bins wherever viable.
11. Introduction and promotion of the garden waste recycling service: Last summer we introduced a new garden waste recycling service. This is an easy-to-use weekly subscription service, costing £90 for 12 months (equivalent to £7.50 per month). Charging for the service means that the costs are not being met by the many residents who live in the borough but do not have a garden or who already compost their garden waste at home (which is free and the most environmentally friendly option for garden waste).
12. The service is a convenient, good value (at approximately £1.84 per collection) service that makes it easy to recycle, without disincentivising home composting, and reduces the amount of waste we have to send for disposal. It is helping residents with garden waste to recycle more and prevent as much waste from our borough having to be incinerated.
13. We already have c.1,600 subscribers and now that we are in the growing season we are collecting over a tonne of garden waste each collection day.
14. Preparation for the introduction of food waste collections for homes with communal bin stores: We have now begun work on getting a food waste recycling service in place for all homes with communal waste collection arrangements. As properties with communal bin stores are unlikely to be able to accommodate a 23-litre outdoor food waste caddy for each household, we are developing alternative storage and collection methodologies which will enable residents to participate.
15. This work covers all homes with communal waste facilities in the borough. A significant proportion of these are managed by our Housing department. We are working very closely with colleagues in Housing as a result and with Tenants and Residents' Association representatives. We have attended the Housing Estates Working Group and Housing Representatives Forum to discuss and promote the new services.
16. Food waste recycling for schools: We are now delivering food waste recycling services to 43 schools in the borough. As well as increasing the amount of food waste we are recycling, this is invaluable in introducing school children to the importance of food waste recycling. Containers and bins for food waste are pictured here being delivered to a school.



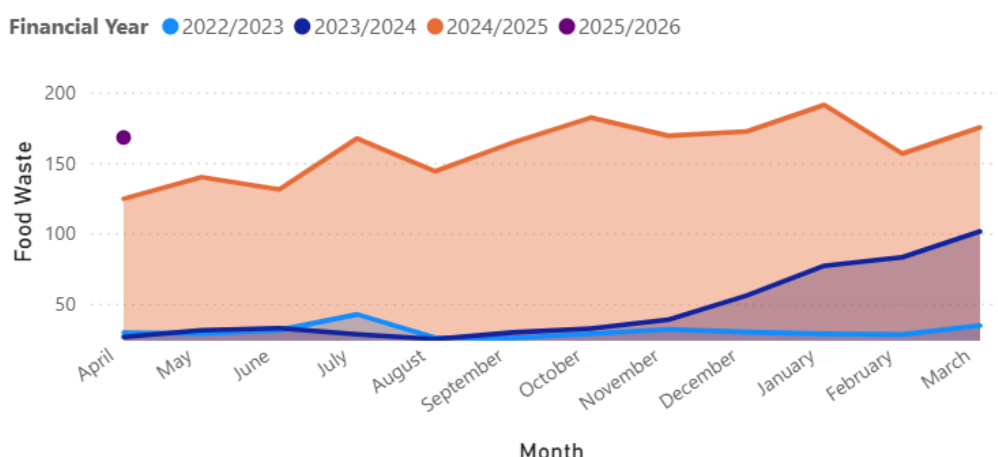
17. Food waste recycling for businesses: We now offer a commercial food waste recycling service as part of our waste and recycling collections for our trade waste customers, this includes our own premises, and the service is being well used in kitchen areas in our offices.
18. Recycling collections for small electrical items from street-based properties: We are now pleased to offer a collection service for small waste electrical and electronic items from street-based properties. Our refuse and recycling vehicles have all been fitted with small cages so these items can be collected and recycled separately. Residents do not need to book this service but can simply place the items out with their refuse and recycling on their scheduled collection day.
19. Flats above shops: We have run a pilot in Askew Road to test how we can offer food waste collections to those living in flats above shops, with no outdoor space to leave a collection caddy. The specialised container is pictured below. The collections here have worked well and are continuing. We anticipate rolling out this style of collections to similar streets later this year and we are also exploring whether this will be a suitable methodology for some mansion blocks where there is no space for bins and too many flats per block for individual food caddies to be presented within the property curtilage.



Impact on recycling performance to date

20. Figure 1 below shows the impact of the roll-out on the food waste tonnage (noting that the roll out began in November 2023):

Figure 1: food waste tonnage by month:

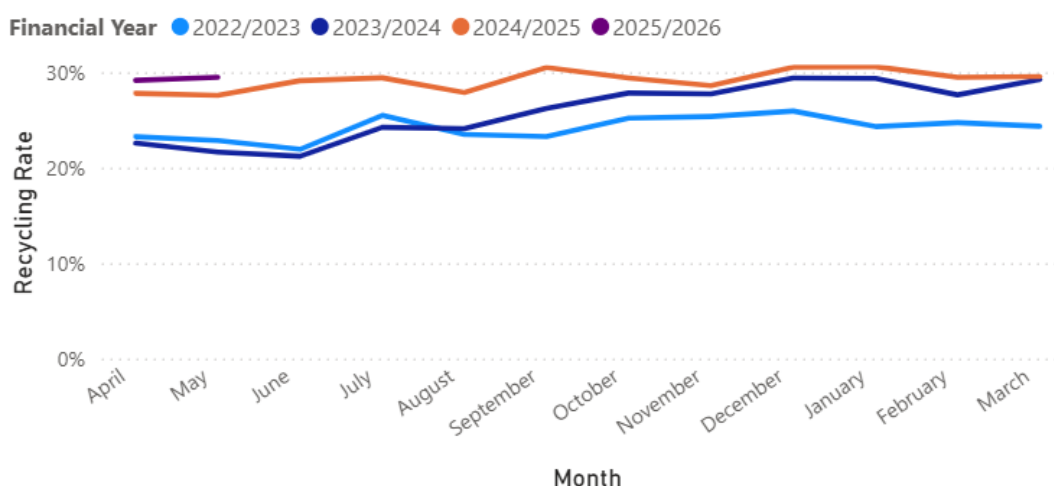


The light blue, dark blue and orange lines represent tonnage collected in 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 respectively, with the purple dot showing the data available to date for 2025/26.

The increase in food waste tonnage collected for recycling over this period shows a significant increase and we are now collecting well over 150 tonnes per month of waste which is now removed from the general waste stream and being recycled instead. We expect this to continue to grow as we introduce food waste for homes with communal waste collection arrangements.

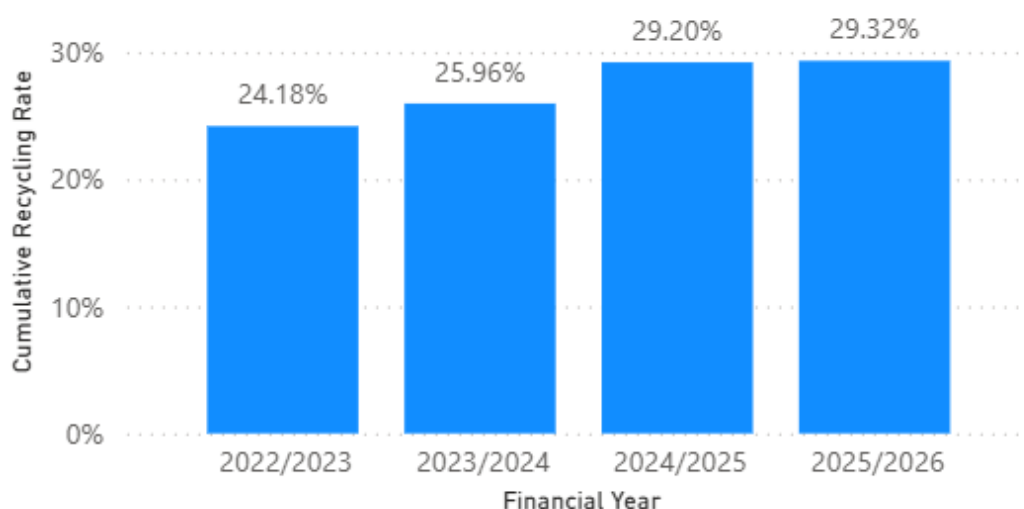
Figures 2 and 3 show the impact on our recycling rate to date:

Figure 2: Recycling rate by month



The light blue, dark blue, orange and purple lines represent the tonnage collected in 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 respectively.

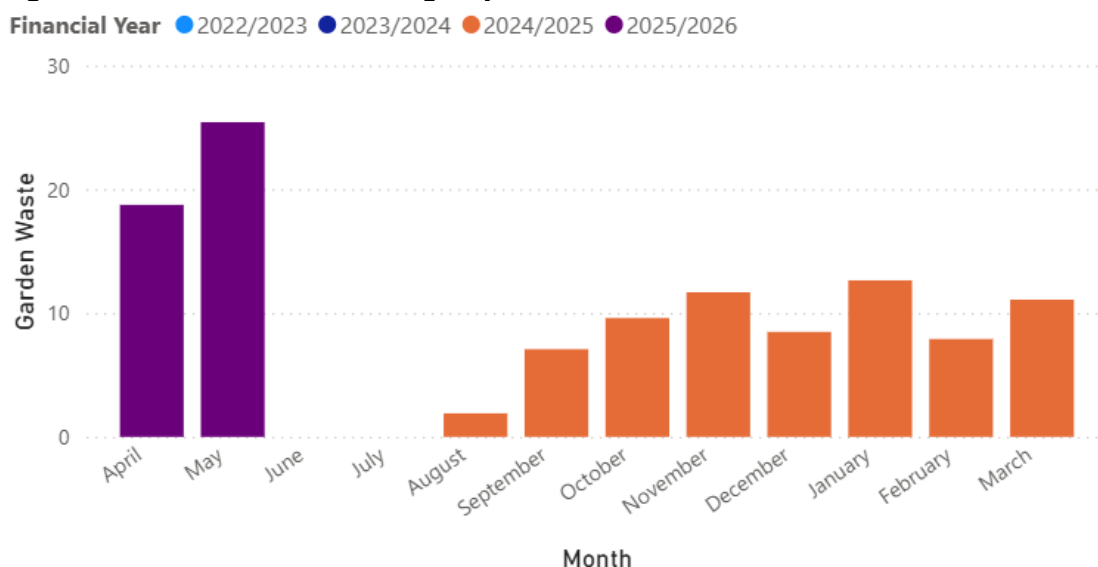
Figure 3: Recycling rate by year (2025/26 shows year to date so far)



The positive impact of the new services is already very clear. The increased recycling rate as a result of the new waste collection services rollout has added by over 5 percentage points to our recycling rate – an increase of over one fifth.

21. Figure 4 below shows the garden waste tonnage collected to date under the new recycling service. Again, this is expected to grow as the number of subscriptions increases and through the growing season this year.

Figure 4: Garden waste tonnage by month



The orange bars represent waste collected in 2024/25 by month (with the service beginning in August) and the purple bars show waste collected so far in 2025/26.

22. As well as the increase in recycling performance, the introduction of food waste recycling has had a significant benefit to our score in Climate Emergency UK's

assessment of council performance through their Council Climate Action Scorecards. Climate Emergency UK assess all UK councils on the actions they've taken towards net zero and in LBHF, Climate Emergency UK pulled us out as "top performer Council" for Waste & Food (we scored 80% vs the single-tier council average of 48%) and it was the section where we improved the most year-on-year (going up 27%) which is attributable to the food waste rollout.

Further improvements – next steps

23. On-going improvement of recycling service use and uptake from street-based homes: We are continuing to monitor the level of participation in the recycling schemes including checking for contamination and working with residents to drive up participation and quality of recycling.
24. Food waste roll-out for all homes with communal waste collection arrangements: The first tranche of food waste services concentrated on delivering food waste recycling services to street-based properties. Now this has been completed we have begun to offer the service to homes with communal bin stores. We have very varied housing stock and we are assessing the best solution for each location across the borough – usually this will be a similar arrangement to the existing waste and recycling, for example a smaller, separate, communal bin for food waste. We are aiming to cover the whole borough by April 2026.
25. Increasing materials that can be recycled: We are working with the Western Riverside Waste Authority to introduce “soft plastic” recycling which could include some types of plastic wrap. It is hoped that it may be possible for these items to be included in our recycling collections by 2027/28.
26. Mobile recycling centre with WRWA: We are exploring the introduction of a mobile recycling service which could provide a mobile neighbourhood collection service for some items that can be recycled at the main Household Waste and Recycling Service at Smugglers Way, making it easier for residents to recycle and reducing the need for trips by car or van.

Community engagement and social value

27. Doing things with residents and not to them is at the heart of all our services and this has been exemplified in our recent service change work. We are also committed to achieving high levels of social value with our waste and cleansing contractor, Veolia. In 2024/25, the following outcomes have been achieved:
 - 27 local Full Time Employee (FTE) hires, plus 2 x armed forces veterans, 9 x young people Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET), and 2 x homeless hires.
 - 584 hours of careers support delivered in schools and prisons.
 - 43 weeks of apprenticeships delivered on contract plus an additional 86 weeks for under-represented groups.

- 121 hours of school and college visits delivered.
 - £14.5k worth of community project funding via sustainability fund.
 - 143 staff volunteering hours
28. These outcomes have been achieved by the groundwork laid down in the first year of the contract, through forming partnerships and developing tailored events for target groups to support employment and engagement. Partnerships such as these will enable Veolia to continue to consistently and continually deliver social value through the length of the contract and these include:
- Employment support agencies such as H&F Works, Shaw Trust, Job Centre Plus.
 - Homeless charity St Mungos West London.
 - HMP Wandsworth, and prison charities including A Fairer Chance, Stand Out, and Bounce Back.
 - Resurgo, a local youth employment partner.
 - Hammersmith Community Gardens Association
 - Schools and education providers across the borough.
29. To March 2025, the proxy value of social value delivered on the contract is £1,772,983.

LIST OF APPENDICES

None